

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

GTV & MAASRANGA

BBPL

Chattogram v Khulna

Live from 1:30pm

Sylhet v Rajshahi

Live from 6:30pm

SONY ESPN

FA Cup

Birmingham v Blackburn

Live from 6:30pm

Watford v Tranmere

Live from 9:00pm

Leicester v Wigan

Live from 11:30pm

SONY SIX

Australia v New Zealand

Third Test, Day One

Live from 5:30am

South Africa v England

Second Test, Day One

Live from 2:30pm

TEN 1

FA Cup

Man City v Port Vale

Live from 11:30pm

TEN 2

FA Cup

Rochdale v Newcastle

Live from 6:30pm

Fulham v Aston Villa

Live from 9:00pm

Wolves v Man United

Live from 11:30pm

Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League

Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nation-

al Stadium, Dhaka

Chattogram v Khulna

Time: 1:30pm

Sylhet v Rajshahi

Time: 6:30pm



Bashundhara Kings players celebrate one of the three goals they scored against Bangladesh Police in their Federation Cup semifinal encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# Bashundhara ensure back-to-back finals

SPORTS REPORTER



Bashundhara Kings made it to their second consecutive final of the TVS Federation Cup after with a 3-0 win against promoted Bangladesh Police FC in the second semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The defending champions of Premier League will play Sunday's final against minnows Rahmatganj MFS, who ensured their first-ever final in any tournament of top-flight football by beating Mohammedan in the first semifinal on Thursday.

Even though Bashundhara Kings had to dig deep to see off Muktijoddha Sangsad in tiebreaker in the quarterfinals, they had it easy against Police, dominating the game right from the beginning on the rain-soaked pitch.

Bashundhara Kings coach Oscar Bruzon started the game without his Lebanese marksman Jalal Kdouh, who had scored two goals in last three matches. The Spaniard pushed winger Daniel Colindres upfront, and the Costa Rican World Cupper set up one

goal in the first half before scoring the team's second goal after the break while Argentinian Nicolas Delmonte wrapped up the victory in stoppage time.

However, it was Bangladesh Police who had the first shot on target, with Antonio Laskov forcing Bashundhara Kings goalkeeper Anisur Rahman to a fine save from a free-kick in the ninth minute.

POLICE 0 – 3 BASHUNDHARA KINGS

Topu 17', Colindres 50', Delmonte 90+3'

Bashundhara Kings took the lead in the 17th minute when Khan Mohammad Tara brought down Colindres inside the box, with Tapu Barman converting the spot-kick, giving some 2000 supporters a cause to cheer.

The beaten finalists of last season took full control of the game after the break and created some good chances before Colindres doubled the lead with a powerful shot which brushed the hands of Police goalkeeper Arifuzzaman Himel in the 50th minute.

Five minutes later, Kyrgyz defender Artur Muladzhanov made a goalline save to deny Bashundhara Kings from extending the lead while Tapu saw his header from inside the six-yard box miss the target by a few yards.

Bashundhara Kings wrapped up the victory in the stoppage time, with Delmonte smashing a left-footer into the near post after dancing past three defenders.

"We understood the game from the beginning and the difference was the turf, which was a bit wet and unfit for playing one-touch football. We tried to play in their half and holding Nicolas in between their two foreign forwards and it worked really well," Bruzon said after the match.

Bangladesh Police coach Nikola Vitorovic felt they gifted all three goals owing to mistakes of defenders.

"It was a tough game for us because I have played the same players with a short period of rest. I had to change my plan due to overnight rain and played long ball which did not suited us. But I'm still proud of our boys because it was a historical moment for Police to play in the Federation Cup semifinal," the Cypriot coach said.

## Stojkovic leaves Guangzhou

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Guangzhou R&F have announced the departure of Dragan Stojkovic from his role as head coach at the Chinese Super League club by mutual consent on Friday.

Stojkovic spent four-and-a-half seasons in Guangzhou after replacing Cosmin Contra midway through the 2015 season, when he helped R&F avoid relegation to China League One, the second tier of Chinese football.

In his first full season, Stojkovic led the club to a sixth place finish and improved on that in 2017 when R&F finished fifth, just missing out on a place in the Asian Champions League.

However, R&F struggled over the last two seasons of Stojkovic's tenure despite the goal scoring exploits of Israeli forward Eran Zahavi, who finished as the league's top marksman in 2019.

Zahavi set a new Chinese Super League record with 29 goals in 28 games last year but R&F could only finish 12th, prompting the club to seek a replacement for the former Yugoslavia international midfielder.

Chinese media reports have linked former Barcelona and Arsenal defender Giovanni van Bronckhorst with the now vacant post.

# Ibrahimovic up for the challenge at Milan

AFP, Milan



Swedish star Zlatan Ibrahimovic warned Friday he was not back at AC Milan as a mascot but for the "last bit of adrenaline" and to lift a club he loved out of a difficult situation.

"I'm not here as a mascot to dance for the fans next to the Devil (Milan mascot)," the 38-year-old told a press conference in Milan.

"I'm looking for the last bit of adrenaline I might have. At my age you're not looking for anything else but a challenge.

"When you're 38 and get hired by AC Milan it's something that doesn't happen very often, coming here means I still have something to give.

"I got more requests now than when I was 28," he continued.

"I am ready, I feel more than alive, I hope to play immediately."

Ibrahimovic has signed a six-month contract worth 3.5 million euros (\$3.9 million) with the option for an additional year.

It will mark the Swede's second stint with Milan, seven years after he left for Paris Saint-Germain.

He played for the Rossoneri from 2010-2012 scoring 56 goals in 85 appearances and helped the club win their 18th and last league title in 2011.

One of the most successful clubs in the world the seven-times European champions are 11th in the table just seven points above relegation.

Milan chief football officer Zvonimir Boban contacted the Swede after he left Los Angeles Galaxy in October and the calls intensified after a 5-0 loss to Atalanta last month, their heaviest defeat in 21 years.

"After Atalanta I got lots and lots of calls, it wasn't a difficult decision

in the end," continued Ibrahimovic.

"Last time I left Milan I didn't want to leave. Milan gave me the happiness of playing soccer, I hope this will be true again.

"Things need to be improved in the field and that's why I'm here.

"Milan is always AC Milan and the image of ACM is something that cannot be deleted, you can't change history."

Ibrahimovic said that going to

Ibrahimovic started his career at Malmo in his native Sweden.

He went on to play for Ajax, Juventus, Inter, Barcelona, Milan, PSG and Manchester United, winning trophies with all these clubs.

But Boban warned that the club would not just be counting on Ibrahimovic.

"We can't forget the horrible and unacceptable defeat at Bergamo, but we must not hide behind the broad



Zlatan Ibrahimovic holds aloft his AC Milan jersey alongside club legends Paolo Maldini (L) and Zvonimir Boban (R) during his official signing at Casa Milan on Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

the United States after his career-threatening knee injury at Manchester United had refuelled his passion.

"After two MLS championships I feel more than lively," he said.

"It's not that I can play like when I was 28 or 35, things change but you know what you can do. Rather than running you can kick a ball from 40 metres," he smiled.

shoulders of Zlatan Ibrahimovic," said Boban.

"We hope the course of the season will change and are optimistic about the effect he will have on the team and the environment but we need results."

AC Milan's first game after the winter break will be at home against Sampdoria on Monday.

# Mourinho fears bad news on Kane injury

REUTERS, London



Tottenham Hotspur manager Jose Mourinho fears bad news about the hamstring injury that forced striker Harry Kane to hobble off during his side's 1-0 defeat by Southampton in the Premier League on Wednesday.

Kane, scorer of 27 goals for Spurs and England this season, pulled up late in the second half after having a goal disallowed and left the ground on crutches.

He will definitely miss Tottenham's FA Cup third-round clash at Middlesbrough on Sunday.

"We don't know yet, but I think later today we will have news," Mourinho told a new conference on Friday.

"But if you ask me for my feeling, good news or bad news, I am more on the bad news than the good news, that's my feeling. What he felt, leaving the match, the way he did it, it took him only two seconds to

realise the severity of the situation.

"Some opinions from the medical department before he has all the tests, I don't think we will have good news. I think we will lose him for some period."

Kane has been injury-free this season but has had several layoffs in the last few seasons because of ankle problems.

Hamstring injuries vary in their severity but typically a tear could result in around month on the sidelines.

It would be a major blow to Tottenham who are six points behind fourth-placed Chelsea after mediocre results at Christmas.

"His quality, the routines we have for him, every minute of every game he doesn't play we will miss him," Mourinho said. "But I don't want to be crying all the time, want to focus on the players available."

The good news for Mourinho is that forward Son Heung-min will be back from suspension for the trip to Middlesbrough after missing three games following a red card against Chelsea.

## Ghana FA fires coaches of all teams

REUTERS, undated

Ghana's Football Association (GFA) has sacked the coaches of all their men's and women's national teams, the country's governing body has said.

The GFA did not give a reason for the move but its president Kurt Okraku, who was appointed in October, promised to "build a new association" following allegations of bribery and corruption in a documentary filmed by an investigative journalist.

It brings to an end Kwesi Appiah's second reign as the national team coach. He was appointed a second time in 2017 following a two-year stint between 2012-2014.

Under Appiah, Ghana failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup after playing in the three previous editions and were eliminated in the second round of the Africa Cup of Nations last year -- their earliest exit since 2006.

"The Ghana Football Association has dissolved the technical teams of all national teams with immediate effect. The decision affects both male and female national teams," it said in a statement released late on Thursday.

The country decided to dissolve its national football association in 2018 after a recording in the documentary appeared to show officials, including the body's then president Kwesi Nyantakyi, taking kickbacks. Nyantakyi, also a former member of FIFA's General Council, was later banned for life by FIFA.



Liverpool's two goalscorers -- Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane -- celebrate their first goal against Sheffield United at Anfield on Thursday night.

PHOTO: REUTERS